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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how to encourage widespread adoption of comprehensive school-reform models--adoption outside the schools and districts that took part in the development process. It refers to such models as "design-based" schools. The paper defines what is meant by a school design and describes receptive school and district environments that are likely to encourage adoption of promising designs. It also reviews the incentives governing the behavior of local stakeholders and considers the possibility that key local actors might be unwilling to cooperate with comprehensive school reform, inclined, in fact, to undermine it. It calls for performance pressures to encourage the adoption of design-based schools and suggests the establishment of state-level incentives to encourage widespread implementation. These incentives are appropriate for all design-based models, whether those proposed by NAS-supported organizations or others. (Contains 33 references.) (DFR)

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New American Schools

How to Create Incentives for Design-Based Schools

ED 450 481

Paul T. Hill

After five years of investment in new designs for public schools, New American Schools (NAS) is coming face-to-face with the challenge of implementation. In recent decades, innovators have been able to develop and demonstrate new methods in schools under their direct control, but they have had great difficulty gaining widespread implementation of those ideas in other schools. Will the New American Schools designs suffer the same fate, or will they, as intended, become resources used for school improvement in thousands of schools across the country? This guide for states and districts explores this crucial question.

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Getting Better by Design

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Volume 6

New American Schools

New American Schools (NAS) is a dynamic coalition of teachers, administrators, parents, community and business leaders, policy makers, and experts from around the country committed to improving achievement for all students by dramatically changing America's classrooms, schools, and school systems.

Unlike many reforms that are add-on programs or isolated projects, NAS designs aim to improve the whole school, from curricula and instruction to funding and community involvement.

Recognizing that one size doesn't fit all schools and communities, NAS offers a choice of different designs—blueprints—for helping all students achieve at high levels. (For information on each design, turn to the inside back cover.)

New American Schools has clear and consistent goals:

- Establish supportive and assistance-oriented school systems.
- Develop school and teacher capacity to teach all students to high academic standards.
- Spend resources wisely with an eye to student results.
- Build broad and deep community support for education improvement and excellence.
- Make America's public schools places where all students excel.

New American Schools is results-oriented.

In a short period of time, NAS has generated impressive results. In many schools using a NAS design:

- students are producing higher-quality work, achieving at higher levels, and showing improvement on standardized tests and other measures of performance;
- discipline problems are down and student attendance and engagement are up;
- both teacher enthusiasm and community involvement are on the rise; and
- student achievement is improving quicker than conventional wisdom suggests is possible.

New American Schools helps partner districts restructure.

To overcome traditional barriers to school excellence, NAS provides focused assistance to its district partners in five key areas:

- rethinking school finance, including investment funding and resource reallocation strategies;
- revamping professional development infrastructures to support whole-school transformation;
- setting high academic standards and linked assessments;
- giving schools authority to make decisions about curriculum, staff, and spending as well as holding them accountable for results; and
- engaging parents and the public in improvement efforts.

New American Schools believes in shared accountability.

The foundation of NAS is a strong partnership built on shared responsibility for results. Clearly defined roles link partners to one another and to results. All stakeholders in a NAS community—teachers, administrators, district leaders, parents, NAS Design Teams—are expected to take responsibility and to be held accountable for helping to improve student achievement.

NAS partners also commit to regular and rigorous assessment of their performance, resulting in the sound business practice of continuous improvement. The RAND Corporation is the independent evaluator of the New American Schools' effort.

How to Create Incentives for Design-Based Schools

Paul T. Hill

The recent history of educational innovation suggests that designs like those supported by NAS might not be widely used even if they meet the tests of affordability and feasibility. As critics noted soon after NAS was founded, many earlier "model school" programs had created plausible new approaches to instruction but had little effect on public education as a whole.[1] As the NAS designs have matured, developers have become increasingly concerned with the "scaling-up" problem, i.e., the challenge of attaining widespread use of the designs in schools and jurisdictions other than those participating in the development process. Teachers, administrators, school board members, and parents might resist implementing the designs because they do not think they will work as advertised. School leaders who want to become associated with a prestigious design or developer might adopt the design's name but implement it halfheartedly. Educators accustomed to creating eclectic mixes of ideas from many sources might try to use particular elements of designs in isolation from other elements considered essential by the designers. Activist teachers and principals might try to use a design but find that less enthusiastic colleagues or groups of skeptical parents limit what can be done.[2]

Paul T. Hill

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[1] See Volume 2 in the NAS *Getting Better by Design "How-To"* Series, *How to Rethink School Budgets to Support School Transformation* by Allan Odden.

[2] See Kirst (1991).

From its inception, NAS has been aware of the implementation challenge and has tried to anticipate it. The eight organizations sponsored by NAS have cooperated with teachers, administrators, and parents to ensure that the eight designs are understandable and usable by people other than the original designers. For four years, NAS and its Design Teams have worked with individual schools interested in contributing to design development and with states and school districts interested in increasing the numbers of schools employing schoolwide models of instruction. NAS teams have also tried to ensure that the designs can be implemented with the amounts of money normally available for public schools[1] and that the designs do not require teachers and principals to have rare or irreproducible skills.

This paper examines how to encourage widespread adoption of comprehensive school reform models, adoption outside the schools and districts that took part in the development process. It refers to such models as "design-based" schools. The paper begins by defining what we mean by a school "design" and describes receptive school and district environments that are likely to encourage adoption of promising designs. It then reviews the incentives governing the behavior of local "stakeholders" and considers the possibility that key local actors might be unwilling to cooperate with comprehensive school reform, inclined, in fact, to undermine it. It next calls for performance pressures to encourage the adoption of design-based schools and suggests the establishment of state-level incentives to encourage widespread implementation. These incentives are appropriate for all design-based models, whether those proposed by NAS-supported organizations or others.

"The eight organizations sponsored by NAS have cooperated with teachers, administrators, and parents to ensure that the eight designs are understandable and usable by people other than the original designers."

School Designs: More than Theory

In many ways, a school design is akin to a computer operating system. It is an architecture that helps guide the efforts of individual teachers so that they reinforce and complement each other and shape the work of the school as a whole to ensure that students learn what they must know. A school design is much more than a theory, although theory is often involved. It is also a practical, hands-on guide outlining what should be learned, how it should be learned, and how instruction should be delivered. The best school designs suggest:

- What information, skills, habits, and values the school intends to impart to all students (and, implicitly, what forms of student learning the school considers of secondary importance).
- How all the instructional and other experiences the school offers complement each other to help students gain key knowledge, skills, and habits of mind.
- What effort and performance the school demands of students.
- How the school motivates students, both by making learning intrinsically rewarding and by demonstrating that the school's demands lead to desirable results for the students.
- What repertoire of methods individual teachers will use in doing their jobs.
- How the work of different teachers is expected to fit together.

A design is intended to show how the efforts of diverse people can be coordinated effectively; how a school intending to use a given design should be staffed and how it should allocate money among salaries, materials, noninstructional materials, and investments in self-assessment and improvement; what promises schools

[1] See References: Problems associated with prior school reform efforts.

should make to parents, public officials, and the broader community; how a school should evaluate teacher and administrator performance; what responsibilities staff will have for daily performance and for self-improvement; and how far a school should go to serve a family whose needs or demands might be better met by a school using a different design. Performance goals are part of a design, but their main component is an idea about how the parts of a school work together to motivate students and help them learn.

Every organization is based on some principles of design. Business firms have trade secrets and production methods that set them apart from other firms making the same or similar products. Toyota's ideas about inventory control, production, and outsourcing are elements of its integrative design principles. Athletic teams have theories that underlie their selection of competitive strategies (e.g., how simultaneously to protect the quarterback and free up receivers) and tactics (e.g., whether to run or pass in a particular situation).

There is no reason to think that there is a single design that is best for all schools. Schools that emphasize direct instruction have different theories of teaching and learning, and of how the parts interact to form a whole, than do schools that emphasize learner-constructed knowledge. Some good schools build their own designs over years of collaborative work. Others are founded to put into practice a known design, such as Montessori, Waldorf, the International Baccalaureate, or the NAS-sponsored ATLAS, Co-NECT, and Roots and Wings. Schools that tap into existing designs (including religious schools like yeshivas) build on written theories and well-developed networks for teacher preparation and quality control.

As the Montessori, International Baccalaureate, and religious schools examples indicate, there is nothing new in the concept of school design. Moreover, these examples underscore the importance of diversity and variety in school design. However, the idea of a school design is contrary to two common characteristics of American public schools, eclecticism and loose coupling. Eclecticism is a result of nearly three decades of state and federal categorical programs and court orders, which have encouraged schools to become holding companies for multiple programs, each providing a limited range of services to a subset of all the school's students.[4] Comprehensive school designs are supposed to reduce fragmentation and banish habits associated with "programmitis." Those very habits, however, represent a threat to implementation, both when designs are first introduced and as they are put in place. New designs threaten accustomed ways of doing school business.

"Performance goals are part of a design, but their main component is an idea about how the parts of a school work together to motivate students and help them learn."

Similarly, Weick's seminal paper on loose coupling produced important insights about the inevitable consequences of an organization's reliance on the initiative and judgment of individual professionals.[5] Many educators, however, have come to regard loose coupling as a virtue in itself. A basic premise of the effort to create schools of design is that coupling within a vast number of schools has become too loose. Connections, particularly between individual teachers, need to be more explicit and pervasive if schools are to work effectively.

Receptive Environments

Though the various NAS designs differ in important ways, they all require changes in the ways schools and school districts do business. In general, schools can implement focused and consistent approaches to instruction only if four conditions apply:

[4] See References: Effects of multiple school programs.

[5] Weick (1976).

1. Schools must have the freedom to invest time and resources in learning how a particular design is intended to work—and in adapting the design to the school's own circumstances.
2. School resources must come in lump-sum form so that leaders are not continually forced to add new programs and abandon old ones to meet funders' changing priorities.
3. Schools must have some stability in leadership and staffing so that a group of collaborators can stay together and learn together.
4. Staff and families must have some freedom of movement among schools so that people who find a particular design unattractive are free to choose another school rather than having to wage guerrilla warfare over the merits of the design in place in "their school."[6]

"[NAS] recognized that public schools based on the designs would be rare unless local financing and governance of public education were changed. . . ."

These four conditions rarely apply, especially in urban school systems. Urban schools are required to accept teaching staff on the basis of seniority; they are susceptible to having principals and teachers abruptly reassigned by district superiors; their families are assigned to particular schools with little flexibility to choose others; and their staff enjoys little freedom to reallocate funds or student and teacher time.[7]

From the outset, NAS recognized that a small number of schools could create exceptional freedom for themselves and develop or use strong designs.[8] However, it recognized that public schools based on the designs would be rare unless local financing and governance of public education were changed in important ways. NAS and its evaluator, RAND, worked to identify the preconditions necessary for widespread adoption and use of comprehensive school designs in public education. These conditions include:

- variances from district norms on staffing and teacher work rules;
- variances from district norms on instructional practices;
- school-level freedom, within the limits of applicable labor laws, to hire, fire, train, and evaluate teaching staff;
- individual school freedom to select sources of assistance, including NAS Design Teams and similar organizations;
- school control of resources and freedom to implement practices implicit in NAS designs, including flexibility in purchase of equipment and instructional materials and school control of funds that permit fee-for-service payments to design-based assistance organizations;
- performance accountability adjusted to fit different designs' scope and sequence of instruction; and
- opportunity for parents and teachers uncomfortable with a design's teaching methods to choose other schools.

NAS has sought to establish these preconditions in its scale-up phase by reaching explicit agreements with a small number of states and school districts about changes they will make in the operating environment.[9] Jurisdictions seeking such agreements with NAS have been motivated by the belief that encouraging schools to adopt NAS designs and building long-term assistance relationships with NAS Design Teams can strengthen their own locally initiated reform efforts. Some district leaders are convinced of the importance of building every school around a particular design; others may be attracted primarily by the opportunity to associate with prestigious and well-funded

[6] Another formulation of the last point is that staff must all agree before a design can be rigorously implemented. Because unanimous agreement is extremely difficult to attain in organizations, such a precondition would automatically limit the use of designs to a very small number of schools.

[7] See Muncey and McQuillan (1993) and Sarason (1990). See also Bimber (1994) and Hill, et al. (1990).

[8] See, for example, Bodilly (1995). Bodilly distinguishes a supportive district environment from a supportive school environment.

[9] NAS jurisdictions include the states of Kentucky, Washington, and Maryland, and localities including Memphis, TN, San Diego, CA, Dade and Broward counties, FL, Cincinnati, OH, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA, and San Antonio, TX.

external organizations. As this is written, execution of these agreements is in an early stage, and it is not yet clear whether participating states and districts will fully implement them.

It is clear, however, that if NAS is to realize hope of affecting education in thousands of sc. ols across the country, its designs will have to be used in districts without such agreements and with scant prospects of receiving special financial assistance or recognition as pioneers, or of associating directly with prestigious innovators like Ted Sizer or Robert Slavin. In those cases, whether schools can and will use NAS-style designs depends on the actions and reactions of teachers, administrators, and community leaders. Who are the key actors capable of determining whether a locality will take advantage of the opportunity to use a schoolwide design? What incentives govern their behavior? How can they be encouraged to cooperate with the implementation of design-based assistance? These questions frame the heart of this paper.

Key Actors and Current Incentives

A long list of local actors must cooperate in creating a receptive environment for implementing NAS designs. At the school level, it includes regular classroom teachers, specialists (e.g., for special and bilingual education, or Title I), parents, principals, and other school staff and administrators. At the district level, it includes school board members, district superintendents, deputy and associate superintendents, central office career administrators, teacher union leaders, and community leaders representing government and various business, civic, and ethnic groups.

All of these people may have good reasons to favor specific changes of one kind or another in school organization, curriculum, teaching methods, and governance. To the extent that such changes can be justified as promising ways to improve student learning, each of these groups is likely to want to be supportive.

However, each of these actors has additional interests that might conflict with his or her interest in school improvement. Taxpayers might want higher student achievement but be reluctant to pay more for it. Parents, teachers, and administrators might support better schools in general but be reluctant to increase their own personal risks, stress, or inconvenience. Local government testing might call for more rigorous standards but retreat in the face of evidence of high levels of student failure. Because the links between changes in schooling and improved student achievement are subtle and complex, these actors can easily resolve apparent inconsistencies between the desire for better schools and their reluctance to support particular reform measures. They can always reject specific proposals as implausible, unproved, unnecessary, or too expensive.

"Who are the key actors capable of determining whether a locality will take advantage of the opportunity to use a schoolwide design? What incentives govern their behavior? How can they be encouraged to cooperate with the implementation of design-based assistance? These questions frame the heart of this paper."

This analysis assumes that all the adult actors (in schools and in the broader local system) have reasons both to support and oppose the kinds of changes required for design-based school reform. It also assumes that the mixes of incentives and disincentives are different for different actors, based primarily on the degree to which their jobs or political arrangements may be disrupted or enhanced by particular designs. They may also be inclined to support or oppose implementation based on the degree to which their experience predisposes them to believe that use of designs will lead to improved student learning. This latter indication is

difficult to assess because support for the idea of design-based reform (or for a particular design) is to some degree a matter of taste and may be linked to a particular design. An individual or a group that finds one design attractive (e.g., Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound) might find another intolerable.

". . . two groups are thought likely to be favorably predisposed toward the idea of basing schools on designs—parents, because a design can make a school more understandable and more apparently consistent, and business leaders, because a school design is analogous to something they understand well, a business strategy."

In general, however, two groups are thought likely to be favorably predisposed toward the idea of basing schools on designs—parents, because a design can make a school more understandable and more apparently consistent,[9] and business leaders, because a school design is analogous to something they understand well, a business strategy.

Table 1 outlines the general gains and losses perceived by people who work directly in the schools—regular classroom teachers, specialist teachers, principals, and other administrative staff.[10] These generalizations are based on the results of several past and ongoing studies of site based management, districtwide decentralization efforts, and teacher union policies and leadership strategies.[11] As with all the subsequent analyses in this paper, Table 1 focuses on group interests and ignores individual variations. Most members of a particular group should see the gains and losses approximately as outlined here, but different individuals will weigh them differently. For example, a teacher who believes strongly in a particular design might disregard the extra work and loss of

[9] For a complementary analysis for incentives for teachers and principals, see Weiss (1995).

[10] These include research on site-based management in addition to the sources listed above. See References: Studies of site-based management. Note that some statements about union leaders come from the former sources; others are based on an ongoing University of Washington study on internal leadership strategies by local teacher union executive directors, led by the author.

TABLE 1

DISTRICT
TEACHERS
Classroom

Specialist

Union Steward

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
Principal

Others

GAINS AND LOSSES FOR SCHOOL ACTORS

re: implementation of a schoolwide design

GAINS	LOSSES
• Student benefits • Collegiality, influence over school as whole • Possible new leadership roles, income opportunities • Greater opportunities for younger staff	• Need to invest personal time in decision-making, learning skills • Possible conflict with other teachers who do not like a design or do not want to change their methods • Loss of clarity re: rights of senior teachers
• Student benefits • Possible new job opportunities	• Possible loss of role; need to relearn and adapt • Loss of clear labor/management distinctions
• Student benefits • Professional opportunities for teachers who wish to use designs	• Possible loss of job in favor of person selected by staff or parents • New, unfamiliar responsibilities, unclear role, loss of positional authority
• Student benefits • Greater school flexibility, more freedom in use of funds, ability to influence staff hiring, training, promotions, firings	• Possible loss of job
• Student benefits	• Need to learn and accept new jobs

clarity about power relationships emphasized in the table. Similarly, a teacher who strongly prefers personal autonomy and places little value on collaboration with other teachers may discount the promised collegial benefits of schoolwide designs. However, in general, Table 1 accurately summarizes gains and losses for each of the major school stakeholders.

As the table makes clear, school-level staff who do not want to complicate their lives or are skeptical about building their schools around particular designs can point to significant potential losses that such changes might bring. Specialist teachers, e.g., those who are paid by federal categorical programs and teach only those students who meet special eligibility requirements, run particular risk of losing their positions, since many designs eliminate the distinctions between special needs students and all students. Similarly, lower-level administrators, including assistant principals, service coordinators, "deans," or heads of subschool units, frequently called houses, might consider themselves at high risk of losing their jobs. In a given school, these groups might either strongly support or hotly oppose adoption of a schoolwide design, depending on whether it preserves their roles or creates a new package of responsibilities they are comfortable accepting.

"In a given school, [staff] might either strongly support or hotly oppose adoption of a schoolwide design, depending on whether it preserves their roles or creates a new package of responsibilities they are comfortable accepting."

Union stewards also have reasons to oppose use of school designs, especially those that blur the boundaries between labor and management and make teachers accountable for the overall performance of the school. As citywide union officials have said in the course of several studies, school-level stewards are likely to be highly committed to collective bargaining protection of teachers' rights and job protections under the district labor contract. Many are dedicated to

TABLE 2

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

Superintendent

Associate & Assistant

Others

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

TEACHER UNION LEADERS

GAINS AND LOSSES FOR DISTRICT ACTORS
re: implementation of designs in most or all schools

GAINS	LOSSES
• More options for school improvement • Less need to work through central office structure • Greater personal influence on individual schools	• Loss of clarity; turbulence • Need to supervise downsizing of central office to obtain cash to be used at school sites • Need to develop ways to evaluate distinctive schools • Loss of central office infrastructure
• Some new job opportunities: overseeing school evaluations, network building	• Possible loss of jobs • Loss of control over staff development and placement
• Possible opportunities running schools, providing commercial service to schools	• Loss of role • Loss of jobs
• Opportunity to focus on questions of individual school goals and performance • Real options re: failed schools • Greater clarity on expenditures	• Loss of control over staffing decisions • Loss of opportunity for day-to-day decisions about schools
• More varied opportunities for teachers • Greater teacher job satisfaction due to better integration into school operations • Opportunity for new union roles in building school networks, training teachers, and operating schools	• Loss of control over school staffing via contract • Greater ambiguity in labor/management relations • Pressure to open up the bargaining unit and admit new specialists • Loss of clarity re: teacher job rights, rights of seniority

the traditional idea that employees' responsibilities should be limited to the performance of their own jobs, and that management alone is responsible for the integration and performance of the organization as a whole. Teachers often value the union steward's insistence on these issues, even while they admire and listen to other teachers who have a more flexible view of the school and teachers' possible roles.

"Adoption of designs lets superintendents and school board members make decisions directly about individual schools' goals and purposes. District leaders gain the option of introducing a new design to make a dramatic change in a failing school or of creating a new design-based school to compete with or replace a school that has resisted piecemeal attempts to improve it."

For regular classroom teachers and principals, the losses and gains are more nearly balanced. They too risk changes and extra work, but they can also gain by being parts of a better integrated, collegial, and productive school. As in other reforms (like charter schools) that make schools accountable as units, gains and losses for principals and teachers come from an increase in freedom paired with greater responsibility. Individuals will differ on how much they are willing to change their work and how much responsibility they prefer to bear. Analyses of site-based management suggest that the most senior teachers are the most reluctant to surrender their traditional classroom autonomy.[12] Principals face the prospect of being held responsible for the management of money, grounds, subcontractors, and staff. Teachers face the possibilities of greater personal responsibility for overall school performance and of having to render harsh and potentially divisive judgments about the performance of their colleagues. But the tradeoffs are clear, and many teachers and principals can readily see the advantages of working in an organization that is united by a design.

Table 2 considers district-level actors. It summarizes gains and losses for school system personnel above the school level—for school board members, the superintendent, other central office administrators, and leaders of the district teachers' union local.

The actors most likely to think building schools around designs brings more losses than gains are district administrators below the level of the superintendent. A district committed to supporting schools of diverse designs (and to decentralizing control of funds so that schools can purchase assistance and materials from design organizations) is not likely to need large central office units dedicated to curriculum, staff development, and the like.[13] Some of these administrators might see opportunities for use of their skills in entrepreneurial organizations such as the NAS Design Teams or other organizations providing fee-based support services to schools, but most would see their current jobs threatened by both loss of mission and reduction of district-level spending.

Building schools around particular designs presents school board members and the superintendents with a much more evenly balanced set of losses and gains. On the loss side, issues that can be dealt with quietly and privately in a standard bureaucratic system—questions like whether to transfer staff wholesale out of a failing school or simply add more resources, and whether to remove or discipline staff members who are interfering with implementation of an important program or school design—must be faced head-on and in public.

On the positive side, superintendents and board members are likely to think that building every school around a particular design can give them new ways to do their jobs effectively. Adoption of designs lets superintendents and school board members make decisions directly about individual schools' goals and purposes.

[12] See, in particular, Muncey and McQuillan (1993, 1996).

[13] See References: Analyses of possible central office structures in a school system dedicated to school autonomy and use of diverse school designs.

District leaders gain the option of introducing a new design to make a dramatic change in a failing school or of creating a new design-based school to compete with or replace a school that has resisted piecemeal attempts to improve it.

Superintendents and board members also gain the advantage of knowing that all schools have comparable amounts of funding. In contrast to the traditional school district structure, which accounts for funds on a program basis rather than per-student, a system made to encourage school designs would account for costs and expenditures on a school-by-school basis. Superintendents and board members would know exactly how much each school had to spend and could trace differences in school assets and programs to school-based decisions, not to the results of administrative processes above the school level.

Perhaps the actor facing the most mixed picture of gains and losses is the local teachers' union head. Union influence rests on its exclusive right to bargain with the school district over teacher wages and working conditions. Unions are also membership organizations whose existence depends on the support of individual teachers, who depend in turn on whether the union advances their interests. To the degree that teachers' unions function as industrial unions, everything they do is supposed to be directed toward protecting teacher jobs and pressing for higher wages, better benefits, and better working conditions. Unions are particularly responsive to senior members whose tenure rights can make them resistant to changes in collective bargaining agreements or redevelopment of schools.

However, as some union leaders have said in recent interviews, in the long-term interests of their members, they must do two things. First, union leaders must contribute to strengthening the productivity and reputation of public education. Second, they must work to make schools better and more fulfilling places to work. As the earlier discussion of teacher incentives suggests, many think that supporting movement toward a system of schools all based on designs is the most plausible way to advance both goals.

In the late 1990s, many union leaders are convinced that the industrial union model is outdated—in particular, that there is little hope in the foreseeable future for major increases in teacher pay and benefits, and that the entire enterprise of public education must become more efficient and more effective if it is to survive. This appreciation of a different and more demanding future explains some union leaders' willingness to contemplate educational reforms that might lead to redefinition of the union's mission. Some are willing to consider the changes in teachers' conditions of employment that widespread use of school designs would require. Some are even willing to contemplate real-dollar school funding and school-site hiring, promotion, and firing of teachers.

". . . the entire enterprise of public education must become more efficient and more effective if it is to survive. This appreciation of a different and more demanding future explains some union leaders' willingness to contemplate educational reforms that might lead to redefinition of the union's mission."

Many of these same union leaders also see the union's future as a professional organization dedicated more to improving teaching and making schools more productive and rewarding workplaces than to maintaining the principles of industrial collective bargaining. Different union leaders will disagree and individual leaders, facing factionalized teacher constituencies, can be expected to emphasize different ideas at different times.

Teachers' union leaders are responsible both for protecting the interests of their current members and for developing a viable long-term role for the union. Facing these conflicts, most can be expected to support small-scale trials of

designs, whether or not they will ever support creation of all the conditions necessary for a system of schools all based on designs.[14]

Table 3 summarizes the analysis of gains and losses for key actors outside the school system—parents and leaders of key civic, business, and ethnic group organizations. A system that favors schools' use of designs would not threaten these groups' jobs or income. Accordingly, in public opinion polls and local political discussion, members of these groups are generally more willing to contemplate fundamental changes in public education.

Parents and business leaders often favor choice-based education systems, largely because they think individual schools should be more accountable and responsive to customer demands. Government and community leaders are often reluctant to embrace major institutional changes in public education, in part because they fear change would weaken the system's focus on racial justice, and because they themselves often run organizations that could be subject to similarly wrenching reforms. Minority group leaders are also cautious about design-based reform. In big cities, many are caught between parents who want change and minority teachers, some of whom oppose any threat to their jobs.

Despite their many reasons for supporting design-based school reform, none of these groups is in a position to support a reform that looks highly risky or disruptive. In many ways, these groups are the most amenable to evidence of design effectiveness. Though they are not likely to impose extremely rigorous standards of proof, all must have some reason, other than the enthusiasm of reformers, that adoption of designs will improve schools.

In sum, getting all the stakeholders involved with public schools—building personnel, district staff, and representatives of the general public—to agree on design-based reform is difficult business. All of these actors have to agree on the

TABLE 3

PARENTS OF STUDENTS

CIVIC LEADERS
General

Minority Groups

Business

[14] For a discussion of union heads' likely concerns about NAS designs see Hill and Millot (1994).

GAINS AND LOSSES FOR PUBLIC ACTORS
re: implementation of designs in most or all schools

GAINS	LOSSES
• Possible increases in student learning • Personal influence, direct access to school policymakers • Choice among schools	• Turbulence • Unfamiliar instructional methods
• Possible greater school productivity, responsiveness • Civic reputation for innovation • Options for children in failed schools • Possible new schools in neighborhoods with poor schools	• General turbulence in school system
• Same as for civic leaders and business	• Turbulence, fears that minority teachers and school employees will be hurt by changes
• Same as for civic leaders and minority groups	• Turbulence; association of businesses with controversy • Risk of embarrassing failures

same set of changes and cooperate in order to achieve them. But any of them individually can sabotage reform. All the actors in this complex reform calculus have compelling self-interests arguing against change; but apart from the public interest, few of them have major incentives encouraging the adoption of design-based schools. One of the challenges for NAS is simply defining a set of incentives capable of altering the existing calculus; the more difficult challenge is putting these incentives in place.

"Most schools are now products of geological layers of regulations, half-implemented past reform initiatives, and bargains among adults. . . . Implementation of a design requires that those fragmented structures be swept away in favor of a coherent and integrated conception of the school as a whole."

Incentives to Shift Perceptions

The previous section simply describes the status quo and shows how, on average, it defines key actors' current views. It does not show how key actors can be encouraged to pay more attention to what they would gain from a system of design-based schools—and less attention to what they might lose. More importantly, it does not show how key actors' perceptions can be changed fundamentally so that they are naturally more inclined to support use of school designs, either in their own schools or in the broader community.

This section considers possible approaches to changing actors' perceptions. Much of this analysis stems from the premise that only a few people will be persuaded by the intrinsic attractiveness of the designs themselves. As Elmore has shown, reforms that rely on the basic attractiveness of a new idea are typically implemented only by connoisseurs.[15] Most reform ideas appeal only to a limited group of educators, and only a limited part of that group is enthusiastic enough (or charismatic enough with their colleagues) to overcome the inertia of current practice and fears of possible losses.

In recent history, no new educational practice or reform has been strong enough to capture anything approaching majority support. Practices that have achieved near-universal acceptance (compensatory instruction for disadvantaged children and provision of the least restrictive educational environments for children with disabilities) have been introduced through systems of regulation, penalties, and rewards that fundamentally change educators' perceptions of gains and losses, not through persuasion or evidence about effectiveness.[16]

An effort to create a system of schools based on design has one important advantage over other reform efforts. Everyone is not required to accept a particular approach to student instruction. A system of schools based on different designs implies multiple alternative approaches to instruction, thus potentially increasing the number of people who think they can create or find a school that fits their preferences and needs.

However, introducing such a system implies fundamentally changing most public schools. Most schools are now products of geological layers of regulations, half-implemented past reform initiatives, and bargains among adults.[17] These structures promote isolation of parts of the school from one another, and their cumulative effect when seen across a school is isolation and fragmentation.

Implementation of a design requires that those fragmented structures be swept away in favor of a coherent and integrated conception of the school as a whole. However, many people feel safe and productive in the roles they play in fragmented schools. Even if evidence and publicity led large numbers of people to expect major gains from widespread or universal use of school designs, some people in key positions—risk-averse teachers and principals, school-level

[15] Elmore (1996).

[16] For an analysis of the incentives created for implementation of these innovations see Hill and Marks (1987).

[17] For a discussion of how the structure of regulations and past bargains divides and constrains schools, see Hill, Pierce and Guthrie (1997).

union shop stewards, and central office staff—would still expect to suffer losses.

What can be done to gain the cooperation of most, if not all, the key actors? The generic answer must be that the underlying preferences of key actors must be changed. That is to say, the basis on which they define gains and losses must be altered.

Most approaches to changing perceptions are very expensive. Actors who expect major losses can be compensated, either by guarantees of lifetime employment in a reformed school system, or by generous retirement settlements. A reform effort using incentives such as these is almost certain. Rewarding dissenters will cost a great deal of money; even those people who might have found useful roles in a new system will have reason to object and gain the benefits. Compensation of dissenters also threatens the success of reform by reducing the funds available for use in and by the schools. Moreover, the extra costs will probably irritate the public actors whose support for design-based reform is also needed.

The only real alternative to compensating actors who expect to suffer major losses is to create a situation in which other actors have strong incentives to ignore objections. These situations must be designed to make the use of school designs intrinsically attractive as an opportunity for most actors to maximize their gains and minimize their losses.

Creating Performance Pressure

The basis of such situations is performance pressure that makes adults want and need to find ways to work together effectively. These pressures should encourage adults to focus on results, not process, use time and resources as productively as possible, hold one another accountable for results, make clear promises about what will be done for students, state clearly what students and parents must do, work to shore up weak spots in school performance, and keep their promises.

Although there are some performance pressures in the current system, they do not attach to whole schools. They do not, therefore, predispose key actors toward use of comprehensive school designs. In the current system, every group of actors within a school has its own performance pressures. Specialist teachers, for example, are encouraged to comply with regulations of the categorical program that employs them; union stewards to protect teachers' job rights under the union contract and press individual staff members' grievances; and regular classroom teachers to avoid clashes with administrators and parents. But, as Weiss has recently shown,[15] teachers in the current system have far less of a stake in building their school's reputation for effectiveness and innovativeness than do principals. Teachers' job security and future opportunities are little affected by whether or not they cooperate with efforts as schoolwide improvement. Principals, on the other hand, can enhance their careers by building reputations as dynamic school leaders or turn-around specialists.[16]

Actors above the level of the school also face performance pressures unrelated to school effectiveness. Central office categorical program coordinators are paid to be preoccupied with the regulations imposed by their funding sources. Assistant superintendents responsible for key functions (e.g., transportation, curriculum, staff development) are responsible for maintaining a central staff and a districtwide program of discrete services, not for school performance. Superintendents and board members are often so burdened by community controversies and political negotiations that they have little time for questions of school performance. Some superintendents, moreover, choose to identify themselves as leaders of a central office rather than as patrons of individual schools, just as some board members see themselves as

[15] Weiss (1996).

[16] Weiss (1995).

TABLE 4

promoters of employment for their political supporters.[20]

Incentives to Create Performance Pressure

The effort to create the "right" performance pressures for regular public schools is not new. Its current manifestations include proposals for vouchers, charter schools, public school contracting, school system decentralization, design-based schools, and high-stakes systems of testing that reward and penalize schools for student performance.[21] All these reform proposals assume that public schools can improve dramatically only if the people who work in them have strong personal stakes in building their school's reputation for effectiveness with students.

"These reform elements—school-level accountability, school-site budgets, the establishment of teacher labor markets, and the creation of exit options for families—can create powerful performance pressure on schools."

The reform proposals cited above differ in significant ways, but they are similar on one critical issue: each of them includes significant incentives to put pressure on schools (and school systems) for performance. First, they regard the school (rather than a specific program or an individual teacher) as the unit of accountability. Next, they balance (and hence justify) school-level accountability by giving schools significant control over their own activities, often with lump-sum budgets. Third, they create teacher labor markets by making individual employment contingent on both the performance of the school and the school's

SCHOOL-LEVEL PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

LUMP-SUM BUDGETS

TEACHER LABOR MARKETS

EXIT OPTIONS

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[20] Within the current system, the one consistent exception to these generalization is the magnet school. These schools exist for defined purposes and usually enjoy relief from some regulations that constrain their efforts to be effective. Teachers and administrators who want to maintain their school's special status do have a shared incentive to collaborate on maintaining the school's reputation for quality, coherency, and effectiveness.

[21] For a discussion of the performance incentives implicit in these competing reform ideas, see Hill, Pierce, and Guthrie (1997).

HOW REFORM EFFORTS CREATE PERFORMANCE PRESSURE AND FAVOR USE OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL DESIGNS

PERFORMANCE PRESSURE	ATTRACTION OF DESIGNS
• Set expectations for student outcomes • Encourage school leaders to establish value-added expectations relative to students' own baselines • Make every student's performance important to the whole school • Emphasize that all members of the school community gain and lose together	• Provide a road map for high productivity • Allow staff to base collaboration on agreed-upon principles • Clarify expectations about student outcomes and student growth rates • Suggest methods for dealing with difficult students
• Locate responsibility for priority-setting at the school level • Allow school to choose between current services and investments in new methods, materials, training	• Provide principles on which to base funds allocation
• Emphasize school's status as an employer • Link teacher pay and job security to personal reputation, contribution to school productivity • Increase range of hiring options available to schools • Encourage teachers' own investment in skills and knowledge	• Emphasize the value of a network for referral of teachers with experience in similar schools • Provide clear requirements for teacher skills and performance to guide teacher self-preparation • Provide standards for teacher performance assessment
• Create incentive for school to deal seriously with parent concerns • Create additional reason for all staff to be concerned about the school's overall reputation • Allow a school to part with families that make impossible demands or with children who disrupt others' learning	• Attracts some parents on the basis of "brand name" • Allows schools of the same design to learn from one another about presenting a school's strengths and weaknesses

assessment of teachers' performance. Finally, they create exit options by allowing families dissatisfied with one school to leave it for another. These reform elements—school-level accountability, school-site budgets, the establishment of teacher labor markets, and the creation of exit options for families—can create powerful performance pressure on schools.

Table 4 outlines the performance pressures each of these four reform elements creates and suggests how design-based public schools represent an attractive response to these pressures. School-level accountability, for example, creates pressure by setting expectations for student results and making every student's performance important; the best school designs provide a road map for dealing with these issues. Establishing teacher labor markets creates pressure for teachers to invest in their own skills and to consider the school instead of the district as the employer; good school designs respond to these pressures by defining clear expectations for skill requirements and standards for teacher assessment. Creating exit options requires individual schools to take parental concerns seriously; school designs respond to this pressure with explicit statements about what can fairly be asked of the school and what cannot. In sum, although it is nearly inconceivable to think of how traditional public schools could respond to these desirable pressures, the basic philosophy underlying design-based schools predisposes them to do so.

Table 4 shows how each of the common elements of proposed reforms creates performance pressure and can predispose school communities toward design-based approaches.

Whether any single incentive listed is enough to shift actors toward use of designs is unclear.[22] Many analysts think that school-level accountability is not enough unless it is combined with at least one of the other reforms (e.g., school control over resources and staffing). Most statewide systemic reform initiatives combine clear state standards with at least a statement of intent to deregulate schools and allow greater school-level choice of instructional methods.

Nine Steps to Create These Incentives

However, realizing that these four reform elements create powerful incentives and capturing the benefits of that potential are not the same thing. It is perfectly clear that although a handful of individual schools have limited authority to experiment with one or more of the reform elements (e.g., lump-sum budgeting or freedom to hire teachers), the overwhelming majority of American schools do not. Experimentation is the exception, not the rule.

Implementation of such reforms runs into a thicket of state statutory provisions, regulations, and red tape that, in combination, stifle widespread adoption. Significant change will require major state legislation in a number of areas. For example, school districts and school boards are creations of the state; the role and mission of boards is defined by state law.[23] School budgeting conventions, categorical program requirements, and teachers' status as civil servants—all such features of the school environment

[22] Proposals for vouchers, charter schools, and school contracting bundle all four features together. For example, vouchers encourage schools to be entrepreneurial organizations, attracting students and funds entirely on the basis of parent choice. Central offices, regulatory authorities, and teacher unions have no role in a voucher system. Schools have complete authority to spend the funds they collect from students' vouchers, and they can hire and fire teachers wherever they like, constrained only by the labor laws that protect employees of other businesses.

Charter school laws allow public authorities to designate private groups to run public schools, based on agreements about instructional methods and performance goals. Individual schools receive lump-sum budgets based on some fraction (up to 100 percent of local per-pupil expenditure), and school managers hire and fire staff (depending on agreements reached with local teacher unions) and decide how much money to invest in staff training, equipment, materials, advice, and maintenance.

School contracting arrangements resemble charter school laws except that schools are legally independent organizations that gain specific rights in their contracts with local school boards. Local boards are allowed to provide schools only through such contracts, and must provide schools with lump-sum amounts of 90–100 percent of local per-pupil expenditure. Contracts are performance agreements, and contracts can be terminated for nonperformance; however, school boards cannot unilaterally impose new requirements on contractors. Schools employ teachers and families choose schools.

[23] See Hill, Pierce, and Guthrie, particularly Chapters 6 and 7, for an analysis of necessary changes in state laws and regulations, and state and local education agency missions required to encourage variety and alternatives in public schools.

accepted as simply the way things are—are ultimately based on state law. Modifying these features to encourage needed incentives at the local level requires changes in state law.[21]

Here are nine steps for states interested in providing performance pressures on schools. They can be enacted in any order states prefer.

Step One: Explicitly authorize design-based schools

The waiver mentality is a guarantor of the status quo. States should clearly provide authority for local education agencies to approve comprehensive school designs at the discretion of local boards and superintendents, without the need to seek waivers—individually, provision by provision—from local or state authorities. The assumption should be that states and localities want to encourage the development of new models for delivering instructional services and managing schools, not that they want designers to answer every conceivable objection before putting them in place.

Step Two: Permit public schools to be independent legal entities

Legally, there is no such thing as a public school. That is why lawsuits against school authorities are invariably directed at school boards and state superintendents of instruction.

Step Two requires legislation to permit public schools to be independent legal entities, capable of receiving funds from state and local sources, maintaining their own budgets, raising funds and cash, and deciding what goods and services they will buy and from whom.

This legislation also needs explicitly to authorize school independence in deciding which instructional strategies they will emphasize, whom they will hire, train, and fire, what ancillary services they will provide, and what will be expected in terms of work and effort from students if they expect to remain enrolled.

Step Three: Reshape state and local education agencies

State and local education agencies today operate as watchdogs and enforcers of the rules. In a system emphasizing design-based schools, that operating style must be abandoned in favor of a style emphasizing guidance, broad policy oversight, and helping schools find technical assistance.

Step Three insists that states redefine the role of state and local education agencies to focus on developing and maintaining a portfolio of healthy and diverse schools. Instead of operating schools as local branches of the central bureaucracy, state and local agencies should come to perceive their role as involving three key responsibilities. First, they are responsible for overseeing and managing a process for selecting the best school designs. Second, they should concentrate on providing assistance, as needed, to help the designs succeed. Third, they should create accountability mechanisms to make sure that unproductive designs are replaced with new and more promising ones.

Step Four: Create smaller education agencies

School enrollments in many of the nation's largest urban districts are larger than the entire populations of some small states. New York City, for example, enrolls about one million students. In such large systems, process and procedure inevitably overshadow pedagogy and school-based accountability. This step encourages states to break down large urban school agencies into smaller, discrete local education agencies. In doing so, states help make sure that school boards and superintendents can encourage the development of design-based schools because their responsibilities will be limited to overseeing a manageable number of schools.

Step Five: Provide for school-site budgets

Nobody can say for sure what it costs to educate a child in any district in the United States because "per-pupil spending" figures are nothing more than the sum of district operating expenses divided by district enrollment. Moreover, per-pupil expenditures within districts are likely to vary as widely as per-pupil expenditures among districts since the most experienced (and most highly paid) teachers have the option of avoiding the most difficult teaching environments in the most difficult schools.

States should establish school budgeting conventions that ensure that practically all public funds available for elementary and secondary education are allocated directly to schools in the form of cash, not centrally purchased goods, services, or employees. Each school should receive the average per-pupil expenditure for that district to budget as it prefers. Since no school would be at an advantage in terms of funds, such a system is likely to distribute services, supplies, and the most experienced and expensive teachers more uniformly around the district.

Step Six: Equalize per-pupil expenditures

Step Six is a logical corollary of Step Five. Equity for students requires that each has access to the same resources. And fairness to the design-based concept implies that it is not reasonable to finance high-cost designs at the expense of others; each design should have approximately the same amount of public money behind it. States should enact legislation to equalize real per-pupil expenditures within districts and (adjusting for cost-of-living differences) statewide, across districts.

Step Seven: Deregulate

Real decentralization requires real deregulation. States should not fool themselves into thinking that school independence and school-site budgets can be maintained in an atmosphere of control from the top through regulations and red tape.

Legislation should require state education officials to abolish all state regulations that cannot be justified on the grounds of student safety, health, or civil rights. A regulatory review process is required that assumes the sunset of existing regulations that do not meet those stringent requirements. Specifically, states should eliminate all state laws and regulations that govern school time and when schools should be open, the kinds of buildings that may be used to house schools, teacher and administrator pay schedules, ratios between teaching and administrative staff, and education and training requirements for would-be teachers or administrators.

If the purpose is to put on a good show and encourage good public relations, regulations are helpful. If the purpose is to hold schools accountable for results, regulations simply get in the way.

Step Eight: Decategorize

Categorical programming is another way to maintain control while going through the motions of providing school independence.

Step Eight addresses one of the most significant impediments to design-based schools: too many teachers and administrators today are responsible only for providing specialized services, under special conditions, to special groups of students—and usually only for a portion of the school day. As current categorical programs stand, such staff cannot possibly be asked to worry about the educational success of the entire school.

This step would eliminate provisions of state law that require schools and districts to single out individual students for particular educational services. Such a change would not mean that students would be denied essential services of one kind or another (e.g., instruction in a home language, remedial instruction,

or provisions to help with the challenge of a disability), only that the presumption should be that the services are provided in the context of schoolwide improvement, not special programming set aside for special student sub-populations.

Step Nine: Amend state labor laws

Finally, if design-based schools are to be encouraged, state laws restricting entry to teacher and governing employment must be modified. This step requires states to amend state laws that (1) restrict access to the teaching profession; (2) stipulate teacher license requirements in terms of numbers of education courses completed; (3) make teachers school system employees, instead of school employees; and (4) authorize union representation for public employees already enjoying the protections and benefits of civil service protection.

Effects of This Nine-Step Agenda

Sweeping reforms such as Kentucky's have been initiated by court orders and sustained by strong coalitions between businesses and major politicians. At the local level, as Bryk, Hill, et. al. report, reforms that significantly increase school freedom and accountability normally emerge outside the state and local administrative structure and from the business, cultural, and foundation communities that normally lead major civic initiatives.[24] As this is written no state or locality has fully adopted any of these reform features.

Though many states have enacted systemic reform laws, none has a fully operating system of school-level performance accountability. All these proposals are controversial, for reasons made clear in the preceding section. Each of them profoundly threatens the interests of one or more key actors in the current education system. Many educators and community leaders also fear that family choice of schools and school choice of teachers could create new opportunities for class and race discrimination. Because the opposition to such changes is so fierce, proponents have been unable even to gain approval for large-scale trials.[25]

Were such laws to be adopted, many key groups would probably change their views about the relative advantages and disadvantages of school designs. Teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members would immediately be concerned with making individual schools more demonstrably effective and with finding efficient ways of turning around or replacing struggling schools. Community leaders of all sorts could also see the link among design, accountability, and school effectiveness. Groups whose current jobs are threatened by a system friendly to schools' use of designs, especially central office staff and specialist teachers, might also identify opportunities for themselves as school leaders, teachers in design-based schools, or private assistance vendors to schools.

"Were such laws to be adapted . . . Teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members would immediately be concerned with making individual schools more demonstrably effective and with finding efficient ways of turning around or replacing struggling schools. Community leaders of all sorts could also see the link among design, accountability, and school effectiveness."

This entire analysis is premised on the assumption that school designs create comparative advantages for schools that will be held accountable for performance. The logic is sound: like any organization whose existence depends on performance, a school will have a comparative advantage if its goals are clear, if the people who work in it all understand their roles and how their various

[24] See Bryk et al. (1997).

[25] The Education Commission of the States has recently proposed such trials. Education Commission of the States (1996).

contributions fit together, and if the architecture that guides their combined efforts leads to a good product that others want. This logic applies to nonprofit social service organizations as well as to business firms.

NINE STEPS TO CREATE PERFORMANCE PRESSURES ON SCHOOLS

Step One
Explicitly authorize design-based schools

Step Two
Permit public schools to be independent legal entities

Step Three
Reshape state and local education agencies

Step Four
Create smaller education agencies

Step Five
Provide for school-site budgets

Step Six
Equalize per-pupil expenditures

Step Seven
Deregulate

Step Eight
Decategorize

Step Nine
Amend state labor laws

However, neither clear goals nor integrated effort nor efficient operation is sufficient in itself. An organization that efficiently produces an inferior product, or that produces a good product at greater cost than others, is unlikely to survive. The design for a school must focus everyone's efforts on student results, maximize the time and effort directly devoted to learning, and lead to high levels of student growth.

Not every design is sure to do all these things. Just as some private schools fail because they are no more attractive or effective than public schools or do not do a good job implementing the ideas on which they are based, some schools based on NAS designs will also fail. Whether from teams sponsored by NAS or from other innovators, a design that provides little guidance for instruction, or that requires teachers and principals to spend large amounts of time negotiating with each other, is less likely to lead to a successful school than is a design that provides specific guidance about instructional methods and ways of solving students' learning problems. Similarly, schools that resist adopting any one design in favor of eclectic combinations of features from many designs (or of allowing every teacher to create his or her own unique approach to instruction) may not fare well in a performance-oriented system.

In sum, the future of efforts to build schools around definite designs depends on two things. First, changes in the governance structure of public education to create comparative advantages for schools of design are essential. This paper defines the changes needed. Second, a set of effective designs and organizations that can help schools use them is needed. NAS has tried to supply some of the latter, but the former ultimately depends on state and local policy makers. Local leaders can use waivers and other negotiated agreements to permit a limited numbers of schools to choose and implement designs. But only state-level leaders can create the mixture of school freedom and performance accountability that can allow school designs to operate to their best advantage in all schools. ◆

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New American Schools Designs

As of Fall 1997, New American Schools (NAS) is at work in over 700 schools around the country. NAS district partners commit to transforming a minimum of 30 percent of their schools within five years. Most partners are on track to meet and exceed this goal by year three. NAS schools reflect one of the eight designs below.

ATLAS Communities
The ATLAS design centers on pathways—groups of schools made up of high schools and the elementary and middle schools that feed into them. Teams of teachers from each pathway work together to design curriculum and assessments based on locally defined standards. The teachers in each pathway collaborate with parents and administrators to set and maintain sound management and academic policies, ultimately resulting in improved student performance.
For more information: (617) 969-7100;
e-mail: Atlas@edc.org; www.edc.org/FSC/ATLAS

Audrey Cohen College
The Audrey Cohen College system of education focuses student learning on the study and achievement of meaningful "purposes" for each semester's academic goals. Students achieve their purpose by using their knowledge and skills to plan, carry out, and evaluate a constructive action to benefit the community and the larger world. Leadership is emphasized and students are expected to meet high academic standards.
For more information: (212) 343-1234;
e-mail: JanithJ@aol.com; www.audrey-cohen.edu

Co-NECT Schools
Assisting schools in creating and managing their own high-tech equipment and network, Co-NECT uses technology to enhance every aspect of teaching, learning, professional development, and school management. Co-NECT schools are organized around small clusters of students who are taught by a cross-disciplinary team. Most students stay in the same cluster for at least two years. Teaching and learning revolve around interdisciplinary projects that promote critical skills and academic understanding, as well as integrating technology.
For more information: (617) 873-2683;
e-mail: info@conect.bbn.com; http://co-nect.bbn.com

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound
Built on 10 design principles, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) operates on the belief that learning is an expedition into the unknown. ELOB draws on the power of purposeful, intellectual investigations—called learning expeditions—to improve student achievement and build character. Learning expeditions are long-term, academically rigorous, interdisciplinary studies that require students to work inside and outside the classroom. In ELOB schools, students and teachers stay together for more than one year, teachers work collaboratively, and tracking is eliminated.
For more information: (617) 576-1260;
e-mail: info@elob.ednet; http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~elob

Los Angeles Learning Centers
The Los Angeles Learning Centers (LALC) design is a comprehensive K–12 model for urban schools. The curriculum and instruction are designed to ensure that all students are taught in a K–12 community, enabling new strategies to overcome barriers by addressing the health and well-being of students and their families. Governance and management are also restructured to engage community members in decision making and to ensure that the design can improve and evolve. LALC also incorporates the extensive use of advanced technology as an essential element for implementation of the design.
For more information: (213) 622-5237;
e-mail: gpruitt@laedu.lalc.k12.ca.us; www.lalc.k12.ca.us

Modern Red Schoolhouse Institute
This design strives to help all students achieve high standards through the construction of a standards-driven curriculum; use of traditional and performance-based assessments; establishment of effective organizational patterns and professional-development programs; and implementation of effective community-involvement strategies. Students master a rigorous curriculum, develop character, and promote the principles of democratic government. These elements of the traditional red schoolhouse are combined with a high level of flexibility in organizing instruction and deploying resources; use of innovative teaching methodologies; student groupings for continuous progress; and advanced technology as a learning and instructional management tool.
For more information: (888) 275-6774;
e-mail: skilgore@mrsh.org; www.mrsh.org

National Alliance for Restructuring Education
This partnership of schools, districts, states, and leading national organizations works to change the education system from classroom to statehouse through a five-point set of priorities. Known as "design tasks," they are: standards and assessments, learning environments, high-performance management, community services and supports, and public engagement. The National Alliance seeks to enable all graduating high school students to attain the Certificate of Initial Mastery, a credential representing a high standard of academic accomplishment.
For more information: (202) 783-3668;
e-mail: nareinfo@ncee.org;
www.ncee.org/OurPrograms/narePage.html

Roots and Wings
This elementary school design builds on the widely used Success for All reading program and incorporates science, history, and mathematics to achieve a comprehensive academic program. The premise of the design is that schools must do whatever it takes to make sure all students succeed. To this end, Roots and Wings schools provide at-risk students with tutors, family support, and a variety of other services. While the "roots" of the design refer to mastery of basics, the "wings" represent advanced accomplishments that students achieve through interdisciplinary projects and a challenging curriculum provided by the design.
For more information: (410) 516-0274;
e-mail: rslavin@inet.ed.gov; http://scov.csos.jhu.edu/sfa

New American Schools

Papers in this series include . . .

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- How to Rethink School Budgets to Support School Transformation
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Education Commission of the States

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